

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the application, with claims 13-22 having been withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement. Reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 1 has been amended to more particularly distinguish the Applicant's invention by reciting that the claimed facilities of the conveyORIZED processing line for wet-processing further includes a carrying frame, and that the structural component which may be raised or lowered in a substantially vertical direction and/or pivoted, is carried by the carrying frame. Support for this amendment is contained in the drawing figures, and well as the specification, see, *e.g.*, p. 13, lines 29-31.

The 102(a) Rejection Should be Withdrawn

Claims 1-2 and 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by US 5,002,616 ("Ketelhohn"). This rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner contends that Ketelhohn would disclose at least one adjusting device for the structural component. The Examiner considers such adjusting devices to be the flexible portions, or deep teeth in the gear, *i.e.*, slots (col. 4, lines 6-25). The adjusting device of the present invention, however, is a device which actively raises or lowers the structural component, whereas, unlike the Applicant's claimed invention, in

the apparatus of Ketelhohn the flexible portions or slots in the spur gears are “reactive” components which simply allow the components to be raised or lowered. In the Ketelhohn apparatus, the transport members (rollers 22, 23) “climb up” a printed circuit board once such board passes by these members or “fall down” from same. In this case, however, only rollers having a rather large diameter will “climb up” thick boards, whereas small diameter rollers could not “climb up” thick boards but would have to be raised by an external force. Therefore, Ketelhohn fails to disclose or suggest the Applicant's present invention.

Applicant's present invention recites at least one adjusting device for the structural component, and that the at least one adjusting device is configured in such a manner that the structural component may be raised or lowered in a substantially vertical direction and/or may be pivoted, and further having a carrying frame, wherein the said structural component is carried by said carrying frame. The adjusting device of the Applicant's invention is distinguishable over the Ketelhohn flexible portions or deep gear slots. Applicant's invention includes an adjusting device which facilitates raising and lowering of the structural component. Ketelhohn neither teaches nor suggests such an adjusting device.

For the above reasons, the Applicant's present invention is not anticipated by, nor is it obvious over Ketelhohn. Reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection is hereby respectfully requested.

The 103(a) Rejections Should be Withdrawn.

Claims 1-12 stand rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Schneider (DE 197 17 511 A1) in view of Haas (DE 38 42 835 A1) and Ketelhohn. This rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner contends that Schneider discloses a conveyorized horizontal processing line for wet processing a workpiece comprising at least one respective transport member (rollers visible in the figures) extending in a horizontal direction of transport, and at least one processing facility (bath 1) which forms one structural component (transport-und Führtungs-elemente-items 2) above the conveying path.

The Examiner acknowledges that Schneider is deficient of disclosing at least one adjusting device to raise and lower a structural component. The Examiner then relies on Haas for its alleged disclosure of at least one adjusting device (the raising device recited in the abstract) to raise and lower a structural component, which the Examiner contends provides adjustment of the nip of the rollers. Haas, however, would not suggest adding “play” for both the rollers and the processing facility. The Examiner additionally relies on Ketelhohn, contending that it suggests providing means in order to move the structural component, in order to allow for the use of coating of thicker substrates (citing to col. 4, lines 6-25).

Ketelhohn is contended by the Examiner to disclose a structural component made up of rollers (transport members) and a processing facility (nozzles). This structural

component is designed such that the upper and lower nozzles are respectively mounted on upper and lower rotatably driven rods, to be carried by the rods for movement therewith toward and away from the path of travel articles through the apparatus, but none for rotation therewith, with the nozzles being mounted between and substantially filling the space between adjacent upper and lower drive disk-like members, respectively, as shown in Fig. 2 (col. 2, lines 50-59).

Thus, the structural components of Ketelhohn consist of nozzles that are mounted directly, such that any movement up or down of the nozzles must be effectuated by raising or lowering each roller shaft individually. Therefore, a rather complicated mechanism must be invented to be used in the Ketelhohn apparatus to raise or lower each of these structural components collectively, assuming that that could even be possible. This is in contrast to the device of the Applicant's present invention where the carrying frame may carry a plurality of transport members and processing facilities collectively and thus may raise them collectively.

Another advantage of the Applicant's claimed configuration is that Applicant's present invention also facilitates improved treatment of the workpieces. Further, the nozzles are disposed between the rollers in the Ketelhohn apparatus and do not extend over the entire width of the transport path continuously. Therefore, treatment of the boards passing by such structural components is not consistent. Treatment of the boards, therefore, cannot be achieved in those areas of the board's surfaces where the processing facilities are not located (this is in those areas where the rollers are located). The

carrying frame of the present invention, in contrast to the cited references (i.e., Ketelhohn), is configured to enable entire extension thereof over of the width of the transport path and thus consistent treatment, because the processing facilities may be located somewhere between roller shafts for example and are therefore not confined to areas between individual roller shafts, for example, and are therefore not confined to areas between individual rollers of one transport member.

In addition, Applicant's claimed invention also provides improved economic benefits. Further, using the claimed carrying frame allows using standard construction elements which may be manufactured at low cost because a high number of identical parts are continuously manufactured. Such standard elements may include the rollers and nozzles as well as bearing inserts for the rollers used in the carrying frame and to be held therein like in a conventional side wall of the device comprising likewise such inserts.

Applicant's claimed invention, including the carrying frame, provides further advantages over Haas. It has furthermore to be considered that the construction of Haas' adjustment device, in contrast to the Applicant's invention, has a number of disadvantages, these being, among other, that complicated parts have to be used, such as the levers, which are not of a bulk product type but must be manufactured individually, that the shafts of the upper rollers appear to bear on the lever edge and hence just on one generatrix of the roller shaft, thus likely to severely wear both the lever and the shaft, and that replacement is complicated because of the complicated construction comprising a plurality of diverse parts.

According to the present invention, instead, Applicant's claimed configuration provides a very cost-effective construction, longer lifetime of this construction and easy maintenance thereof are achieved. This is due to the utilization of an uncomplicated carrying frame which bears on the adjusting devices. The carrying frame may be designed to comprise conventional replaceable bearings (which are designed to present a large contact area to the rollers thus minimizing wear) which may be conventionally inserted into slots in frame legs of the carrying frame. Such bearings are bulk products and may as such be manufactured very cost-effectively.

Therefore, Haas does not disclose the present invention, as claimed, nor does it suggest or teach realizing the same. As set forth above, Ketelhohn and Schneider, alone or when combined with Haas, still fail to teach, suggest or disclose the Applicant's present invention.

For these reasons, the present invention is not obvious or anticipated by the cited references, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 8 and 9 stand rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Schneider (DE 197 17 511 A1) Haas (DE 38 42 835 A1) and Ketelhohn, as applied to claim 1, and further in view of the Applicant's prior art discussed in the application (pages 1-4). This rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

For the same reasons as those set forth above, the combination of references still fails to teach, suggest or disclose the Applicant's claimed invention.

Reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

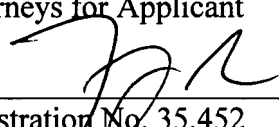
Accordingly, the rejection of claims 8 and 9 in view of Schneider and Haas, Ketelhohn and the art referenced in Applicant's specification, on pages 1-4, also is respectfully traversed.

None of the cited references discloses a structural component which comprises both the transport members and the processing facilities, and, as Applicant has now amended, recites a carrying frame, wherein the said structural component is carried by said carrying frame. Accordingly, the Applicant's present invention, as recited in the pending claims, is not obvious in view of the references cited and relied on in the office action.

For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and a withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

If further matters remain in connection with this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's undersigned representative.

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Date: 7/25/07